

# PRESS RELEASE

## Congressman John Conyers, Jr.

Fourteenth District, Michigan  
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary  
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus

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CONTACT:  
Dena Graziano (202)226-6888

### CONYERS BLASTS ASHCROFT'S REGISTRATION REGULATIONS FOR MIDDLE EASTERNERS

Congressman John Conyers, Jr. (D-MI), Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee, issued the following statement in response to the Justice Department's proposal to require Muslim and Middle Eastern visa holders to register, be fingerprinted and photographed by the government:

"It is shocking that the freest nation on earth could engage in a system of racial and ethnic profiling. It is as though the equal protection clause had no meaning or context whatsoever to the authors of this Orwellian proposal. We have long fought repressive and totalitarian regimes that sought to register their people, ban them from public places, and eventually incarcerate them based solely on their race or religion. It is therefore truly frightening that the Bush Administration is taking us on the first step on this failed road.

The Administration's recent barrage of 'feel good' measures seems designed only to distract from its own recently disclosed failures and efforts to hide those failures. The September 11<sup>th</sup> hijackers were allowed into the country, not because they didn't identify themselves, but because the government didn't properly use the information it already had. The Bush Administration should be spending its valuable resources on fixing the ineptitude of our current law enforcement authorities rather than hiding from its own responsibility and adding burdensome new programs to an apparently broken system.

Minorities have been saying for decades that if we are not protective of our civil rights, the United States could easily stray far from our ideals and freedoms to become the kind of nation we now deplore. The naysayers have repeatedly said that 'It could never happen here.' We now know that it can and is happening here.

Rather than helping to protect our citizens, these registration rules will only serve to further alienate the American Muslim community and our Muslim allies abroad, two crucial allies in our fight against terrorism."